

Message Text

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6931

C O N F I D E N T I A L SEOUL 7566

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FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY HABIB AND DIRECTOR PM VEST
FROM AMBASSADOR SNEIDER

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS KS

SUBJECT: F4D'S

REF: STATE 236677

1. MAAG CHIEF GENERAL STREET, AFTER RETURNING FROM WASHINGTON, INFORMED ME THAT INSTRUCTIONS ON F4D WERE IN THE WORKS AND SHOULD HAVE BEEN RECEIVED HERE BY NOW. WE GATHER THERE HAS BEEN A FURTHER LAST MINUTE DELAY. I AM ALSO DISTURBED BY REPORTS BROUGHT BAIK BY GENERAL STREET OF SOME OF THE PROPOSED CONDITIONS FOR THE SALE, PARTICULARLY POSSIBLE REQUIREMENT FOR KOREA TO PAY FOR REHABILITATION OF F5A ENHANCE PLUS AIRCRAFT.

2. AS YOU KNOW, SECRETARY CLEMENTS PROMISED A RELATIVELY PROMPT REPLY TO KOREA ON F4D'S. CONTINUED DELAY COULD BRING THIS ISSUE INTO FOREGROUND OF PRESIDENT'S VISIT, ALTHOUGH I HAD ASSUMED THAT IT WAS GENERALLY AGREED WE SHOULD AVOID GETTING INTO SUCH DETAILED PROBLEMS. IN MEANTIME, I HAVE BEEN HOLDING OFF ON DELIVERING BAD NEWS ON EXOCET AND M-16'S FOR
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MOROCCO, IN HOPE I COULD BALANCE THIS WITH FAVORABLE

DECISIONS ON F4D'S. BUT IF I HAVE NO WORD VERY SOON, I THINK IT IS ESSENTIAL TO MOVE ON BOTH THESE QUESTIONS BEFORE KOREANS TRY TO PREEMPT OUR DECISION.

3. ON MORE GENERAL PLANE, THERE IS NEED TO RECOGNIZE THAT WE ARE IN A NEW BALL GAME WITH RESPECT TO MILITARY ASSISTANCE. WITH DECLINING GRANT AND CREDIT AID, KOREAN CASH PURCHASES ARE NOW WELL OUTSTRIPPING TOTALS PROVIDED BY MAP ON EITHER BASIS. KOREANS ARE DETERMINED TO USE THEIR OWN RESOURCES, IF NECESSARY, TO BUY MODERN EQUIPMENT THEY PERCEIVE AS NECESSARY. WE STILL RETAIN A VERY MUCH PREFERRED POSITION BOTH IN TERMS OF DIRECTING PURCHASES TO U.S. SUPPLIERS AND DISCOURAGING UNNECESSARY PURCHASES. IN LATTER CONNECTION, WE WILL BE REPORTING SEPARATELY SUCCESS IN HOLDING OFF RAPIER PURCHASE AND DISCOURAGING ADD CONTRACT WITH MCDONNELL/DOUGLAS. HOWEVER, KOREA IS A BUYERS MARKET AND WE HAVE TO COMPETE WITH INCREASINGLY ACTIVE FRENCH AND BRITISH SALESMEN, OFFERING ATTRACTIVE CREDIT TERMS. TO DO SO REQUIRES GREATER RESPONSIVENESS THAN HERETOFORE WHEN KOREA OFFERS TO PURCHASE OR OTHERWISE ACQUIRE U.S. MILITARY EQUIPMENT. RIGHT NOW, FOR EXAMPLE, WE ARE AWAITING ANSWERS NOT ONLY ON F4D'S BUT ON HARPOON, LOCKHEED PROPELLANT PLANT, AND A LARGE NUMBER OF KOREAN DEFENSE PURCHASE ORDERS FOR WHICH FUNDS WILL LAPSE IF AGREEMENTS NOT REACHED BY THEEND OF THEIR FISCAL YEAR IN DECEMBER.

4. I CAN WELL UNDERSTAND COMPLEXITIES OF PROBLEMS FACED IN WASHINGTON AND APPRECIATE YOUR CONTINUED EFFORTS TO BE HELPFUL. BUT, I WOULD STRONGLY URGE A FURTHER EFFORT TO PRESS FOR EXPEDITIOUS HANDLING OF OUTSTANDING QUESTIONS MENTIONED ABOVE AS WELL AS DEVELOPMENT OF STREAMLINED PROCEDURES FOR THE FUTURE, LEST OUR PREFERRED POSITION IN THIS MARKET BE SERIOUSLY CHALLENGED.
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